SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Sir, I would like to know whether the port has started loading coal mechanically to Madras.

SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI: Sir, the project is not yet fully complete. I will get the information and give it to the hon. Member.

Shifting of foreign department of State Bank of India

*85. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the move of the State Bank of India to shift foreign department of the Bank from Calcutta to Mumbai; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAM): (a) and (b) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

State Bank of India (SBI) have reported that there is no move to shift Foreign Department of the Bank from Calcutta to Mumbai. SBI have further reported that with a view to enhance the competitiveness of the bank, it has become necessary to integrate the Foreign Exchange and the domestic treasury operations envisaging in the process the undertaking of some dealing room functions from Mumbai instead of from Calcutta as at present. Government feel that the places from which certain activities are to be undertaken by the banks should be decided by the banks themselves having regard to their best commercial interests.

SHRI R. JANARTHANAM: Sir, there is no move by the State Bank of India to shift the Foreign Exchange Department from Calcutta to Mumbai. But, some operations relating to financial currencies, only sale and purchase of foreign currencies have been moved to Mumbai. This is done by all the Indian banks. All the banks, foreign corporate companies as also large Indian corporate houses, deal in sizeable foreign exchange operations from Mumbai only. The market in Mumbai, over a period of time, has become the main centre for dealings in foreign exchange. The Government, therefore, feels that this issue should be decided by the banks themselves. As banks themselves are looking into their own commercial interests, the banks are doing this thing also.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Question Hour is over. Now, Papers to be laid on the Table.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO STARRED QUESTIONS

Functioning of Silchar Doordarshan Kendra

*86. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of widespread discontentment in the Barak Valley over poor standard of functioning of Silchar Doordarshan Kendra, which being in border area is supposed to be particularly efficient to resist any possible cultural aggression likely to be waged by T.V. centres of neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to improve the standared of programmes as well as the extension of the duration of programmes considering its border area importance; and

(c) why is Government procreastinating in arranging the daily telecast of local news in bengali from this centre despite persistent demand for the same?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SMT. SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) There is one High Power Transmitter (10 KW) and one Low Power Transmitter for DD-2 at Doordarshan Kendra, Silchar providing full time transmission. There is no authentic information about any widespread discontent regarding the functioning of this Station, and there is also no feed back about cultural aggression of the region by TV Centres of the neighbouring countries.

(b) Improvement in the content and extension of the duration of the programmes telecast by various Doordarshan Kendras is an ongoing and continuous process and action in this regard is taken from time to time subject to availability of requisite resources.

(c) Due to constraints of manpower and other infrastructural facilities, it is not possible to start Bengali local news bulletin from Doordarshan Kendra, Silchar.

अजमेर में हवाई अड्डे का निर्माण किया जाना

*87. श्री ओंकर सिंह लखावत: क्या नागर विमानन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या अजमेर में हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण हेतु भूमि अधिगृहीत की जा रही है, यदि हां, तो कितनी;

(ख) क्या राज्य सरकार द्वारा अजमेर में हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण के लिए अधिगृहीत भूमि के लिए मुआवजा देने हेतु किसी राशि की मांग की गई है, यदि हां, तो यह राशि कितनी है;

(ग) क्या पूर्व नागर विमानन मंत्री ने अजमेर में हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण के लिए राशि प्रदान करने की घोषणा की थी; और

(घ) हवाई अड्डे का निर्माण कार्य कब तक प्रारंभ करने की संभावना है?

नागर विमानन मंत्री (श्री अनंत कुमार): (क) से (घ) अजमेर में एक नये हवाई अड्डे की स्थापना पर कुछ समय से जांच चल रही है। भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण के अध्ययन से पता चलता है कि वित्तीय दृष्टि से परियोजना व्यवहार्य नहीं है। भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण द्वारा अपनाई जा रही सामान्य नीति के अधीन राज्य सरकार द्वारा निःशुल्क भूमि प्रदान किये जाने की वचनबद्धता न निभा पाने और केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा बजटीय सहायता प्रदान न किये जाने के कारण, अजमेर में हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण किये जाने के बारे में अभी तक कोई अंतिम निर्णय नहीं लिया जा सकता है। राजस्थान सरकार ने अधिग्रहित की जाने वाली भूमि के लिए 2.5 लाख रुपए मांगे थे जबकि पूर्व नागर विमानन मंत्री ने राज्य सरकार को 2 करोड़ रुपए देने की इच्छा व्यक्त की थी। भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण मामले की जांच कर रहा है।

Upgradation of Highways in Gujarat

*88. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN:
SHRIMATI URMILA-BEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of proposals of the State Government of Gujarat in regard to important roads to declare/upgrade into National Highways are under consideration of the Central Government;

(b) whether the Minister of Roads and Buildings of Gujarat alongwith a delegation of M.Ps had a meeting with the former Minister of Surface Transport on 31st March, 1998 to highlight the pending proposals;

(c) if so, the details of discussion;

(d) which of the important links of State Highways were agreed to be upgraded into National Highways; and

(e) by what time the remaining Stateways are likely to be converted into National Highways?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.